



**State of Vermont**  
**Vermont Department of Education**  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Date: April 14, 2008

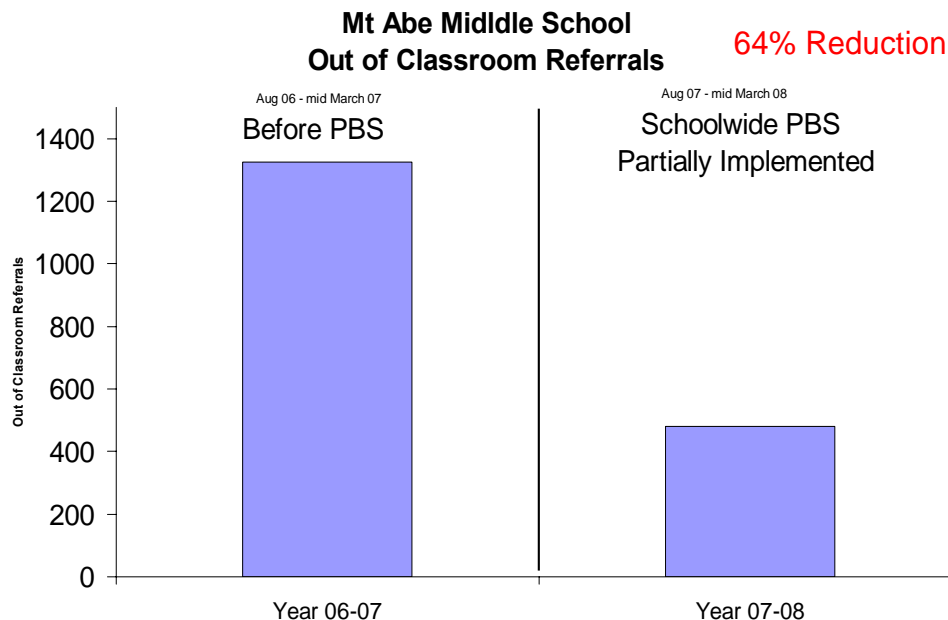
To: Richard Cate, Commissioner of Education  
Karin Edwards, Director, Student Support and Safe and Healthy Schools Teams  
From: Rae Ann Knopf, Assistant Director, Student Support Team  
Re: Priority for Act 230 spending FY 2008/2009

In March 2007, we began a five year plan to avail School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) to all children in interested K-12 schools in the State of Vermont. Naming PBS a priority for Act 230 spending has provided great assistance to schools in accomplishing this goal. A highlight of year-one achievements follows:

1. **100% utilization of BEST and Act 230 funds**, the highest percentage utilization documented in recent years. In the words of one Superintendent:  
*"This past year's option to develop a plan and submit an application resulted in greater funding for our district and more thoughtful requests from the schools."* – Assistant Superintendent.
2. Unprecedented response to Department of Education led initiative:
  - a. **33 schools (10%) across 18 Supervisory Unions (30%) are now engaged in implementing PBS** at some level.
  - b. An additional **17 schools (5%) are known to be actively researching PBS and preparing to implement next year.**
  - c. SW-PBS in Vermont is currently positively impacting the lives of over **14,222 students and their families; 3692 school personnel, 1909 children with disabilities and 222 children with emotional disturbance.**
3. **In the first two cohorts of schools completing school-wide training:**
  - a. **81%** implemented SW-PBS with fidelity within 6 months raising their School-wide Evaluation scores from a baseline score of **45%** to **86%**.
4. These efforts are supported by:
  - a. A diverse **34 member State-wide Leadership Team** including legislators, mental health directors, children and family services directors, superintendents, principals, DOE consultants, private sector services, parent services, school boards association, and professors of higher education that meets quarterly.
  - b. **Diverse School-based Teams** comprised of administrators, teachers, special educators, counselors, support staff, parents, mental health professionals, local business leaders, local law enforcement, local school board members and in some cases supporting district level teams.
  - c. **6 professional consultants have been trained to be PBS Implementation Coaches** with school teams in partner schools and 4 more will be trained in the coming year.
  - d. A **national reputation for quality, integrity, and alacrity** in responding to the needs of children in schools through the foundations of SW-PBS is being developed.

Through all of this, what we have found to be true in this first year is that School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) is more than a behavioral initiative. This model helps school teams to strengthen the foundation for the academic houses they are working to build. The framework of SW-PBS is fully inclusive of all school personnel and the surrounding community including teachers, administrators, special educators, support staff, parents, counselors, community business and local agencies.

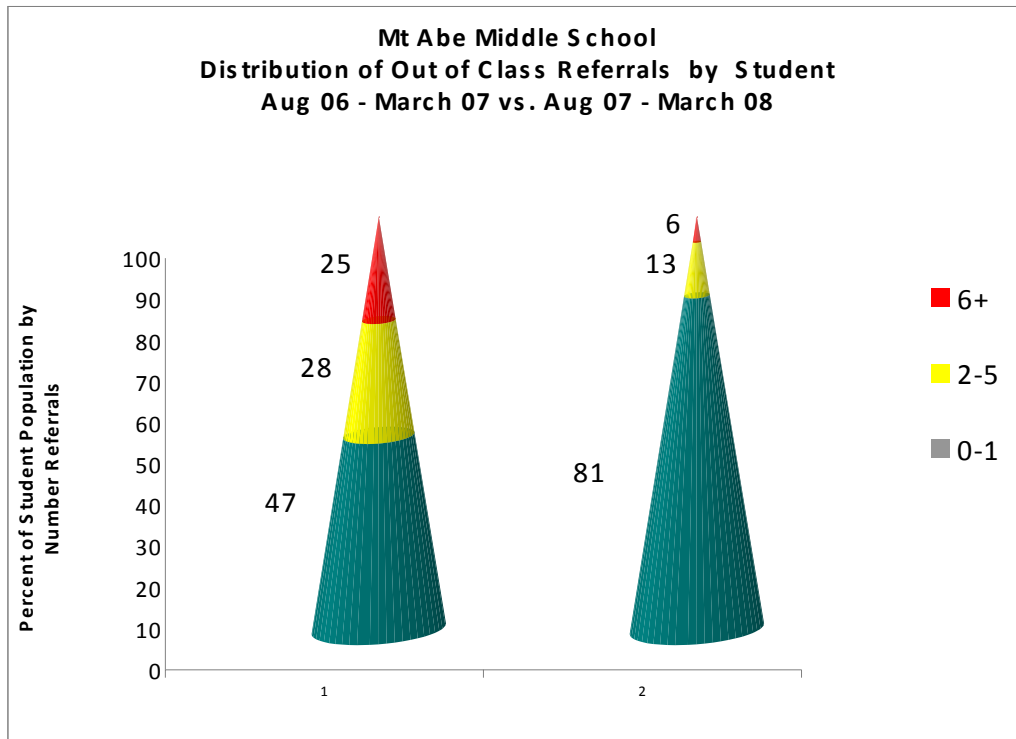
All participating schools create real time data monitoring systems to provide them with a basis for informed decision making as they work to strengthen their school community and culture in support of improved levels of academic achievement for all students. We have found that most schools beginning this work in Vermont have no reliable system in place. One school, Mt. Abraham Middle School did have a system and reported the following changes in out of classroom referrals in their school over one year's time:



#### Recovered Time

Student Time in Class	Teacher Instructional Time	Administrative Time
844 referrals x 40 m	844 referrals x 15 m	844 referrals x 20 m
<b>560 hours →70 days</b>	<b>210 hours→26 days</b>	<b>281 hours→35 days</b>

**We believe School-wide Positive Behavior Supports create a strong base for the Transformation work which we are embarking on over the coming years.** Therefore, we respectfully request you continue to support Positive Behavior Supports as a priority for spending of Act 230 monies in FY 08/09.



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